

Requires Ships to Report Crimes Committed on Board and Adopt Crucial Security Measures

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep Harry Mitchell today applauded passage of the Cruise Vessel Safety Act of 2009 by the House of Representatives. Mitchell voted for the bill which passed by a vote of 416 to 4.

The legislation, H.R. 3360, would close a major loophole in federal law by beginning to require cruise ships to report crimes committed on board to proper authorities. In addition, the bill would require cruise ships to adopt additional security measures such as latches and peep holes for guest rooms, video surveillance to document criminal activity, as well as be equipped to provide emergency assistance to victims of sexual assaults.

"This bill will mean improved safety and security of cruise passengers," said Mitchell, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee which approved the bill earlier this year. "It will bring many of the same, common sense security measures to cruise ships that a lot of us take for granted in major hotels."

Mitchell congratulated Ken Carver of Phoenix who has advocated for the bill. In 2004, Carver's daughter, Merrian mysteriously and tragically disappeared from an Alaskan cruise. The ship's staff did not report her absence, but instead packed her belongings, cleaned her cabin and did nothing for five weeks. A missing-persons report was not filed with the FBI until after a private detective began pressing for answers. [Source: [Arizona Republic](#), July 15, 2009]

Following his daughter's disappearance, Carver established the International Cruise Victims Association, Inc. (ICV), a non-profit corporation representing victims and families of victims of

cruise crimes. ICV began pressing for legislation to require ships to adopt enhanced security measures and report on board crimes to appropriate authorities. [Source: [Arizona Republic](#), July 15, 2009]

"Cruise passengers deserve better, and so do their families," said Mitchell.

A Senate version of the bill, S-588, was approved by the Senate Committee on Science and Transportation earlier this year, and is awaiting floor consideration.

The House previously approved the Cruise Vessel Safety Act on October 23, 2009 by bipartisan vote of 385 - 11 as part of a H.R. 3619, the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2009. [Source: [Roll Call Vote #813](#)]

Today, the House approved the Cruise Vessel Safety Act as a stand-alone measure, which could improve its chance at passage.

In order to become law, the Senate must approve either the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act or the stand-alone version of the Cruise Vessel Safety Act that the House approved today.

Below is the full text of Mitchell's statement on H.R. 3360:

--Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I rise today on behalf of H.R. 3360, the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act of 2009.

--This is important legislation that will significantly improve the safety and security of cruise passengers.

--A Senate version of this bill has earned committee approval earlier this year, and in October, the House overwhelmingly approved this measure by a bipartisan vote of 385 - 11, as part of the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2010.

--The bill will bring many of the same, common sense security measures to cruise ships that a lot of us take for granted in major hotels -- things like latches and peep holes for guest rooms and video surveillance to document criminal activity.

--In addition, the bill will ensure that cruise ships are equipped to provide emergency assistance to victims of sexual assaults.

--Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the bill will require that serious criminal incidents on board are reported to the proper authorities.

--I want to thank Rep. Doris Matsui for her leadership on this legislation.

--I also want to thank Kendall Carver, an Arizonan whose tireless efforts on this issue have been truly incredible.

--As many of you know, in 2004, Ken's daughter, Merrian, mysteriously and tragically disappeared aboard a cruise to Alaska. And, as the *Arizona Republic* recently reported, "Instead of reporting her absence, the ship's staffers packed up her belongings and cleaned up her cabin. They did nothing for five weeks and only filed a missing-persons report with the FBI after being questioned by a private detective."

--This is not just wrong - it's beyond wrong.

--Cruise passengers deserve better. Their families deserve better.

--That's why I want to encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

--I yield back.